

Survey of KCTCS Students Who Transferred
Executive Summary
4-22-10

Overview

Students who transferred from KCTCS to Kentucky public universities were surveyed to help learn about the transfer process from their perspectives. Their responses shed light on their transfer planning activities, satisfaction with college and university transfer services, and challenges they encountered along the way. Examining their experiences with the enrollment and transition processes provides important data and is one step in implementing the Kentucky Transfer Action Plan. The survey shows that Kentucky's institutions are doing many things well, but also points the direction for improvements to make transfer a more seamless part of the state's educational pipeline.

Who was surveyed?

The Statewide Transfer Committee and the Statewide Assessment Workgroup, comprised of two-year and four-year institutional representatives, developed the survey questions and used the Zoomerang online survey software tool to administer the survey to 12,027 transfer students. The survey was sent out three times during February 2010 resulting in a 17 percent response rate. The survey included 2,020 respondents from all eight public four-year universities who had attended one or more of the 16 KCTCS colleges. The survey group was defined as undergraduate, degree-seeking students who enrolled in a public four-year institution in fall 2009 and who attempted or earned more than 10 credit hours at any KCTCS institution(s) since fall 1998.

- Gender: 62 percent female and 38 percent male.
- Race: 88 percent white, 6 percent black, 2 percent Hispanic, 2 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 2 percent other.
- Class: 48 percent seniors, 38 percent juniors, 10 percent sophomores, and 3 percent freshman.
- Enrollment: 81 percent full-time (12 or more hours).
- Major: education (18 percent), health (17 percent), business (17 percent), and STEM fields (16 percent).
- Finances: Educational expenses were paid by:
 - 61 percent loans; 50 percent money they earned; 46 percent grants; 28 percent academic scholarship; 29 percent family.

General Survey Findings

There was no significant difference in the responses of AA/AS completers and AAS/AT completers about their transfer experience. Over half (52 percent) of students surveyed completed an associate degree (AA/AS/AAS/AT).

Before enrolling at their current Kentucky public university:

- 43 percent of students completed an AA or AS degree designed to transfer.
- 36 percent had not earned any credentials.
- 12 percent of students completed an AAS or AT degree.
- 15 percent of students completed a diploma or certificate.
- 3 percent of transfer students completed both an AA or AS and an AAS or AAT.
- 1 percent of students completed a bachelor's degree (BA/BS).

Prior to the spring 2010 semester, 19 percent of the students surveyed completed less than 60 credit hours.

Employment: Almost half (48 percent) of all students surveyed are working 16 or more hours per week. A quarter of students surveyed are employed 16-30 hours/week and 23 percent are employed 30 or more hours/week.

Joint Enrollment: Findings indicate that 10 percent of students surveyed are currently attending more than one institution. These students may be jointly enrolled through a formal joint admission/enrollment agreement between institutions or enrolled as a visiting student at another institution.

Of the students currently enrolled in more than one institution:

- 78 percent are attending a public university and KCTCS.
- 12 percent are also enrolled in a private Kentucky college or university.
- 11 percent are attending another Kentucky public university.

The majority of transfer students were somewhat (37 percent) or strongly (42 percent) satisfied with the academic quality of their educational experience at KCTCS.

Why did KCTCS students transfer?

- Complete a bachelor's degree (96 percent).
- Prepare for a future or new career (93 percent).
- Pursue a degree or program available at university (89 percent).
- Personal and intellectual development (83 percent).

- Convenient location (60 percent).
- Upgrading skills for career advancement in current job (59 percent).
- Availability of financial aid (56 percent).

Transfer Planning

Students want to know more about what to expect, specifically, at every step in the transfer process. A small portion (10 percent) of all the students surveyed did not face challenges in preparing to transfer.

When KCTCS students planned to transfer:

- 75 percent identified courses needed to meet the general education or major requirements of a 4-year institution they were interested in attending.
- 65 percent consulted with a counselor or advisor to discuss transferring.
- 54 percent did not know that electronic information (u.select formerly known as the Course Applicability System) was available to assist in transfer planning.
- 53 percent reviewed institutional catalogs.
- 45 percent used a KCTCS institution's advising/transfer/student success center.
- 28 percent were not aware of KCTCS institutions' advising/transfer/student success centers.
- More than a quarter indicated that they did not need any transfer planning assistance.

Before transferring to a Kentucky public university, KCTCS students:

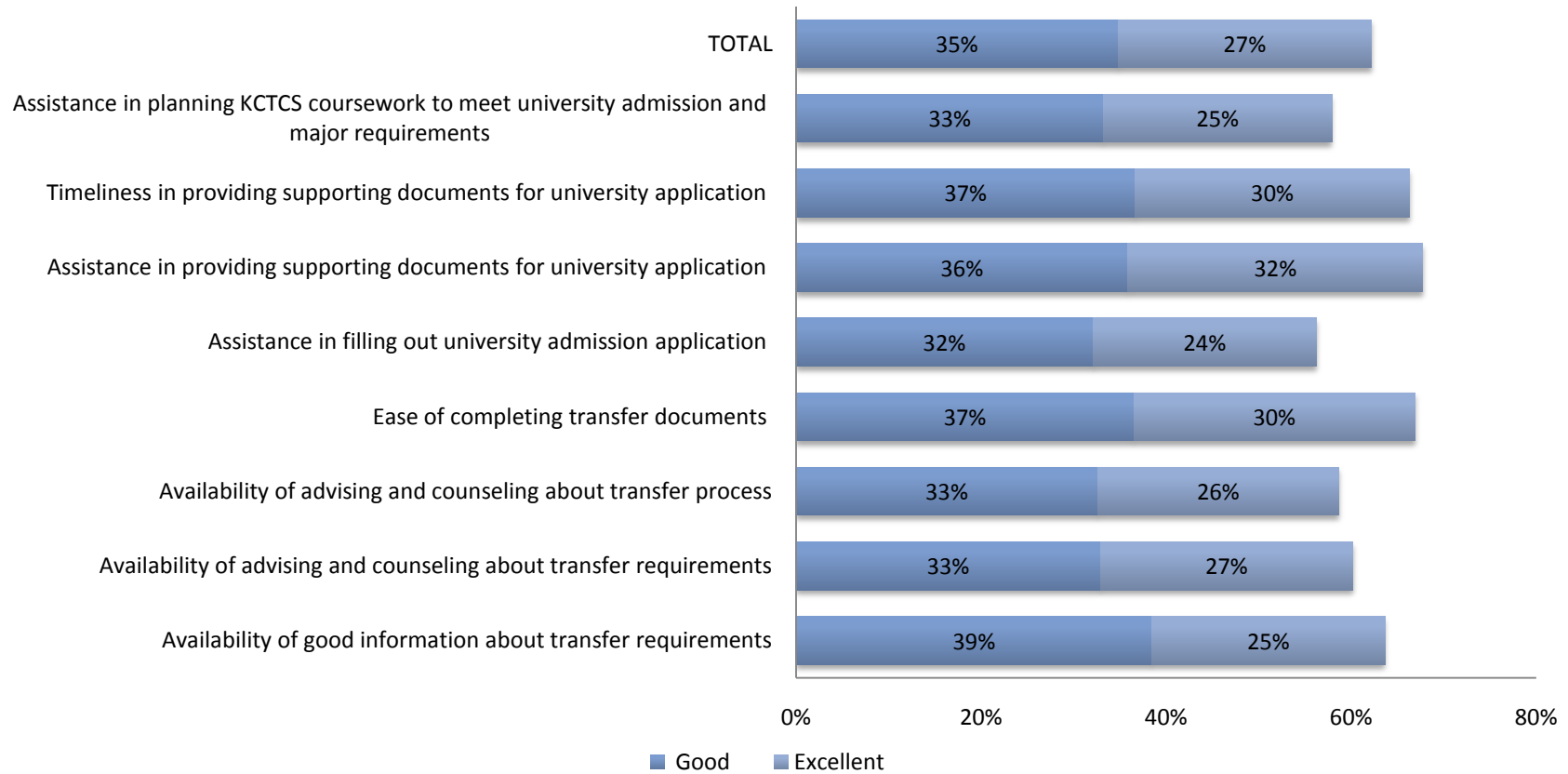
- Used the university's Website for new students (71 percent).
- Spoke to a university academic advisor/counselor about transferring and major requirements (68 percent).
- Visited the university's admissions office (51 percent).
- Visited the financial aid office (43 percent).
- Visited the university's campus for a formal tour (35 percent).

Awareness of General Education Transfer Policy: Only 17 percent of students surveyed know what the General Education Transfer Policy is and how it can help students. However, 45 percent of all students reported that KCTCS had documented them as either Category, Core, or fully General Education Certified on their KCTCS transcript.

Transfer Services

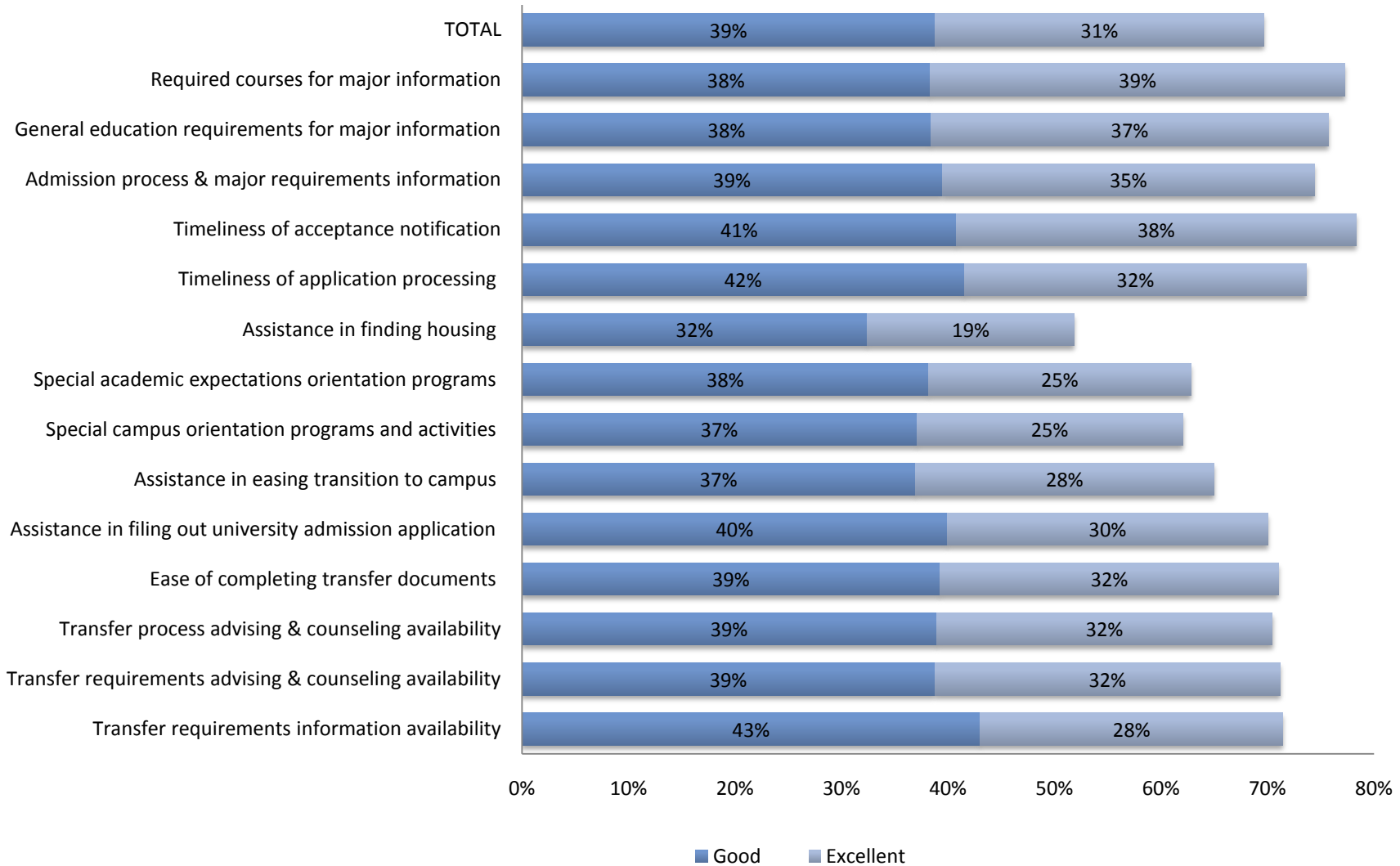
The majority of transfer students rated the transfer services offered by both KCTCS and public universities as good or excellent.

On average, students rated 62 percent of transfer services offered at KCTCS as good or excellent.



This table is representative of the percent of students who answered this question, not the percent of total survey respondents.

On average, students rated 70 percent of transfer services offered by Kentucky's public universities as good or excellent.



This table is representative of the percent of students who answered this question, not the percent of total survey respondents.

Transfer services such as transfer orientation, financial aid, residential life, online courses, and university programs offered close to or on community college campuses helped students adjust to the university setting.

Challenges

Four open-ended questions were included in the survey to explore and enrich the data and to identify common themes, trends, and patterns. The overarching theme that emerged was the need for more thorough, timely, and accurate information between individuals, departments on campus, and institutions about transfer planning, processes, and services.

Advising

Academic advising was the greatest challenge for 25 percent of all students surveyed. Almost all of them indicated that getting information on which KCTCS courses would transfer and apply to their program at the four-year institution was their major challenge.

At KCTCS, these issues were identified by those concerned about advising:

Quality of advising, including:

- Preparation for the transfer admission process.
- Advisors not knowing about program requirements at the four-year institutions, including 2+2 agreements.
- Being given inaccurate advice about courses to take.
- Inaccurate information about how KCTCS classes would transfer.
- Timeliness -- not getting information needed in time to make decisions.
- Information on the whole process and all its steps, including getting transcripts sent – when, why, how.

At the public four-year institutions, the salient advising issues identified were:

Quality of advising, including:

- Availability of advisers.
- Timeliness of information on number and applicability of transfer credits.
- Orientation to campus before arrival.
- Conflicting information.

Admission and Registration Process

Admission and registration process posed the greatest challenge to transferring for 20 percent of all students surveyed. Lack of effective communication between institutions resulted students in delays in students being admitted and registering for classes in a timely manner at the university.

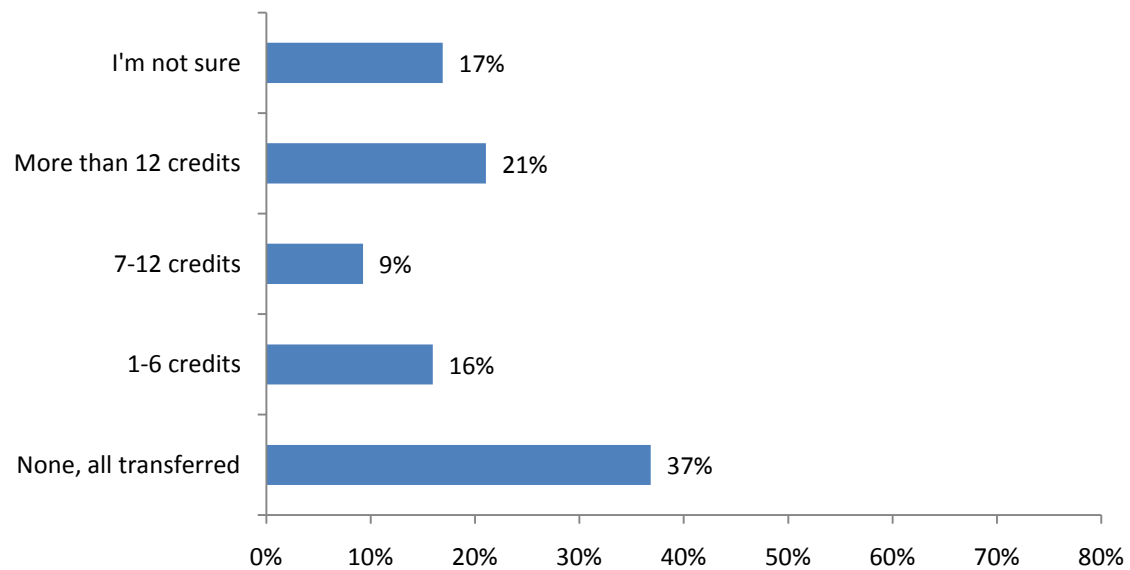
At KCTCS, these key issues were identified:

Paperwork sent to four-year institutions, including:

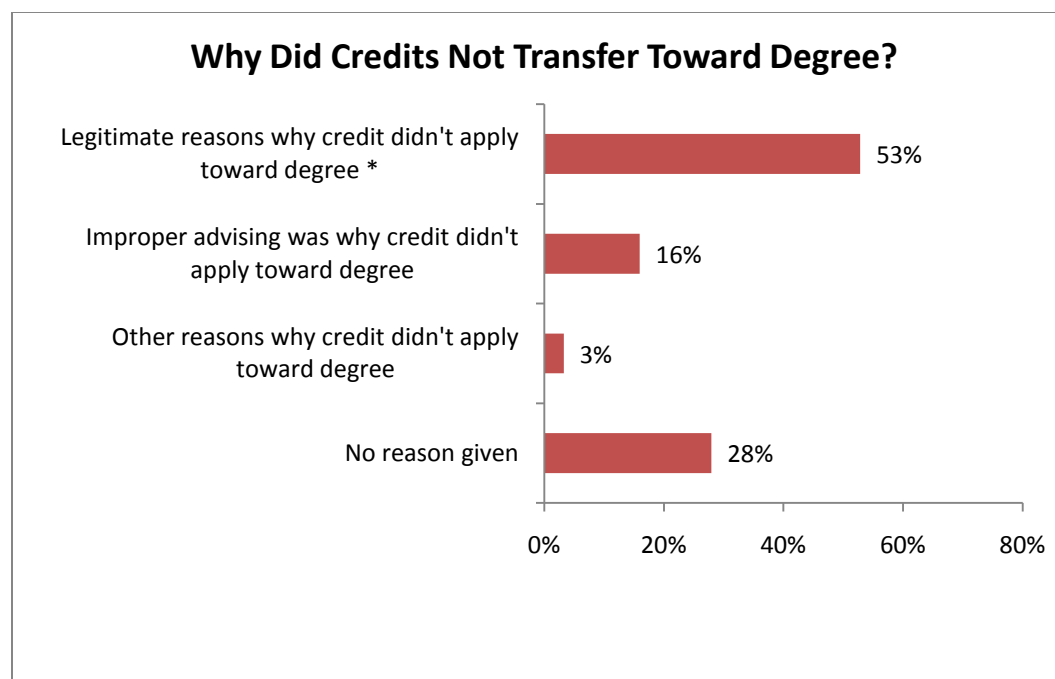
- Timeliness of sending transcript.
- Repeatedly paying to have transcript sent.

At the public four-year institutions, these key issues were identified:

- Confirming receipt of transcript.
- Timeliness in processing application and admissions paperwork.
- Getting transcripts entered into the university's computer system to allow for class registration.

Transfer of Credit**How many credit hours (other than developmental) did not transfer as credits toward student's degree?**

This table is representative of the percent of students who answered this question, not the percent of total survey respondents.



Of the 53 percent (503) of students surveyed who cited legitimate reasons why credit did not apply toward degree:

- 77 percent (387) reported that they were aware that they had taken courses that did not have equivalencies (e.g., developmental or applied technical courses).
- 16 percent (79) accrued credit at KCTCS that was not required by their new major.
- 7 percent (37) were undecided and declared a major when they transferred.

Of the 16 percent (152) who felt that improper advising was the cause of their credit not transferring toward degree:

- 44 percent (67) clearly felt that they had been given erroneous information from an advisor.
 - Of these, 55 percent (37) felt that a KCTCS advisor had given them erroneous information.
 - Of these, 45 percent (30) felt that a four-year institutional advisor had given them erroneous information.

Conclusion:

The survey shows that both the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) and the public universities are significantly improving services to support students intending to transfer. However, work remains to be done. Kentucky's postsecondary institutions must not only know and use best practices in transfer planning, process, and communication, they must be used by all collaboratively. It is important that potential transfer students be identified as early as possible so they can take advantage of the transfer services offered by both KCTCS and the public universities. As a part of the Kentucky Transfer Action Plan, the Council, KCTCS, and the public universities are beginning to address these challenges through the implementation of CollegeSource's Transfer Equivalency System (TES), a new software system that will allow every KCTCS student early in their associate degree to have a clear understanding of all courses and transfer policies that will affect transfer to any public baccalaureate program in the state.